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BY OFFICER COURIER

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MEMORANDUM OF A CONFERENCE ON WEDNESDAY 19 DECEMBER 1951, TO CONSIDER HOW BEST TO APPROACH THE FORMULATION OF A NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY

Present were: Gordon Gray in the Chair during the first part of the Conference; thereafter, Admiral Stevens; Also Messrs. Bohlen, [redacted] Kitee, [redacted] and Wagner.

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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Almost all governmental policies and actions have a psychological content. In order to formulate an acceptable national psychological strategy, it is necessary to reduce the scope of the problem to manageable proportions.

When we ask "What can usefully be said about ways and means of bringing about a retraction of Soviet power and influence?", we have stated the problem in such a way that we can perhaps deal with it.

However, the objective of securing the retraction of Soviet power and influence is not one that we are free to seek regardless of the means. This objective should be sought only by means which (a) are consistent with our freedoms and our evolving way of life, (b) do not incur unacceptable risks of general war, (c) do not inadvertently reduce the sum total of the strengths of our alliances or of those aligned with us, and (d) do not generate psychological climates unmanageably hostile to the United States.

There are several ways to deal with the problem.

Thus, Soviet power and influence could be broken down into geographic components, each with its own psychological vulnerabilities. There is the USSR, the Satellite orbit, the Communist fringe, and the Free World; and it should be possible to arrive at a national strategy by considering it in terms of each such geographic component.

Or, the strategy could be developed in terms of a broad spectrum of means, which might range from military and para-military action, political revolution and coup d'état, to a modification or a weakening

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of the Soviet System, enforceable agreement with the System, or mere denials of opportunity to the System. Each means would employ a variety of techniques.

choice ③ Again, the strategy could be developed from formulations of the pre-conditions for success. This approach should make possible some useful statements regarding time-shaving, or at least the time-span of those pre-conditions.

④ In another approach, one might consider situations in the order of decreasing urgency.

⑤ Yet another approach might be made in terms of our capabilities, present and future.

Although any of these approaches should be capable of answering the question in the second paragraph, each would be time-consuming if followed systematically. Much time could be saved by keeping the factors of practicability, effectiveness, and urgency in proper proportion.

To do so, three separate but converging approaches, each stressing one of those factors, should be adopted. One approach would select for full study only the means wherein we presently have the greatest capabilities (as appraised by OPC); the second approach would select only the means that would be most effective, regardless of our present capabilities (coup d'etat and political revolution); and the third approach would select the areas of most immediate danger (Iran and Southeast Asia).

Care should be taken to present results in such a way that lines of action not falling clearly under the recognized responsibility of PSC should appear as suggestions to or information for the responsible operating agencies.

It was agreed that State, Defense* and CIA/OPC would staff a special small group to carry out this work for review by the personnel of this conference.

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cc: Mr. Gray, [REDACTED] Admiral Stevens,

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Messrs. Ichiles and Nitze, Dept. of State;
Mr. Wisner, CIA.

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